

BRIEFING PAPER

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THE MEXICAN NARCOTICS ERADICATION PROGRAM

We consider the Mexican narcotics eradication program, which is the most comprehensive undertaken in the world, to be one of the two most effective international narcotics control cooperative efforts and one of the positive aspects of current Mexican/U.S. relations. In the mid-1970's, 87 percent of the heroin consumed in the United States was of Mexican origin; by 1981, this figure had dropped to 36 percent (6.5 tons to 1.4 tons). The U.S. has provided \$104 million in general assistance to support eradication programs since 1972. The program has also reduced cultivation of Mexican marijuana, which once dominated the U.S. market, to about 3 percent of the U.S. supply.

There have been indications recently of an increased availability of Mexican heroin. The Mexican Attorney General has assured us that the de la Madrid administration intends to cooperate fully on anti-narcotic matters and will sustain the program at the existing level. His office is presently studying proposals for improving the program's efficiency. Attorney General Smith and INM Assistant Secretary Dominick DiCarlo met Foreign Secretary Sepulveda on April 5, and encouraged continuation of the eradication campaign in full force. The Mexican Attorney General's office also sent a delegation in May to Miami to discuss with the Coast Guard possible steps to improve coordination of the drug interdiction effort in the Yucatan channel. The delegation also travelled to Washington to review the eradication program with senior Washington officials, including FBI Director Webster, Senator DiConcini, Representative Zablocki, and INM Assistant Secretary DiCarlo.

The Mexicans reported that despite favorable growing conditions for the latest opium poppy crop, overall heroin output should not increase significantly because of an intensified manual and aerial eradication effort. We doubt the Mexicans will raise the eradication program for discussion at this meeting, preferring to keep this issue within the existing State Department-INM/Mexican Attorney General channel.

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State Dept. review completed